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Community Engagement

Joint Technical Paper

Interreg Euro-MED Green Living Areas Mission (C4LA)

October 2026

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1. Introduction: Aim of the document and C4LA framework

The Joint Technical Paper (JTP) on Community Engagement is developed under the Interreg Euro-MED Green Living Areas (GLA) Mission, within the Community for Living Areas (C4LA) project. It aims to consolidate and translate the key findings, tested approaches, and practical tools emerging from a portfolio of Euro-MED projects into a coherent, actionable reference for public authorities, mobility, energy and climate and urban planners, and project developers operating in the Mediterranean region.

Community engagement is a horizontal enabler of the green transition. While each thematic dimension of the GLA Mission - green energy systems, climate-resilient spatial planning, sustainable mobility, and integrated territorial development - relies on dedicated technical solutions, none can be effectively designed, financed, or implemented without the meaningful involvement of the people and organisations that inhabit, use, and shape the territory. In Mediterranean contexts in particular, where territorial identity, cultural heritage, and social cohesion are tightly interwoven with the use of public space and natural resources, community engagement is not a complement to technical action but a precondition for its legitimacy, its acceptance, and its long-term durability.

The Mediterranean region is increasingly exposed to the compounded pressures of climate change, demographic transformation, and structural socio-economic vulnerabilities. Heatwaves, droughts, floods, wildfires, energy poverty and rising affordability gaps interact with longstanding territorial challenges such as urban sprawl, marginalisation of rural and island areas, and uneven access to public services. Responding to this complexity requires planning systems and investment processes that are not only technically sound, but also socially anchored, inclusive, and capable of mobilising collective action across multiple scales.

Within this context, this JTP builds on results from six Euro-MED projects whose work places community engagement at the centre of the green transition: **URWAN, RECinMED, Streets for Citizens, NUDGES, CO2PACMAN, and BAUHAUS4MED**. Each project addresses a distinct thematic challenge - from nature-based water management and renewable energy communities to tactical urbanism, behavioural change, climate-neutral islands, and participatory aesthetic regeneration - while sharing a common commitment to co-creation, citizen empowerment, and multi-actor governance. The JTP synthesises their most relevant outputs, including co-design methodologies, living-lab approaches, behavioural and sensory engagement tools, civic crowdfunding mechanisms, capacity-building programmes, and digital participation platforms, into a unified framework that highlights replicable and scalable solutions.

The structure of the document is designed to bridge the gap between project-level innovation and real-world implementation. It first identifies the main challenges affecting community engagement in the Mediterranean context. It then presents a curated set of approaches and tools, structured around the typical engagement cycle of public authorities - from awareness raising and stakeholder identification, through co-design and pilot testing, to long-term governance and evaluation. A dedicated section maps the contributions of the six projects, organised around their tools, methodologies, and pilot experiences.

Rather than presenting isolated solutions, the document reflects a synthesis of ongoing experiences and practices across Mediterranean territories, highlighting common patterns, gaps, and opportunities for improvement. By translating these experiences into practical guidance, the JTP aims to support local and regional authorities in embedding community engagement into the design, financing, implementation, and monitoring of green transition initiatives, in coherence with EU frameworks such as the **European Green Deal, the European Climate Pact, the New European Bauhaus, and the Aarhus Convention on access to information and public participation.**

2. Main challenges of community engagement in the green transition in the MED area

The integration of community engagement into the green transition in Mediterranean territories is shaped by a combination of cultural, institutional, and structural challenges. While awareness of climate risks and sustainability objectives has grown substantially in recent years, and while participatory approaches are increasingly promoted in EU and national frameworks, their translation into consistent, meaningful, and impactful engagement practices remains uneven. The Euro-MED projects examined in this paper consistently report a recurring set of obstacles, which can be grouped as follows.

Awareness without action: the engagement gap

Public awareness of climate change in the Mediterranean is high - surveys repeatedly show that a large majority of citizens recognise the urgency of the transition - yet this awareness rarely translates into behavioural change or sustained civic involvement. Households know what matters, but changing daily routines linked to mobility, energy use, food, or waste remains difficult. Public authorities face the challenge of designing engagement strategies that move beyond information campaigns and that actively support the shift from intention to action, addressing the cognitive, emotional, and structural barriers that keep citizens from engaging more deeply with green initiatives.

Tokenistic and late-stage participation

Although participatory practices are increasingly embedded in planning and investment processes, their implementation often remains formal rather than substantive. Engagement frequently occurs late in the decision cycle - after key technical and financial choices have already been made - or is limited to consultation on predefined options. This reduces the perceived legitimacy of the process, generates frustration among participants, and limits the capacity of communities to shape outcomes. The transition towards genuine co-design, where citizens, civil society organisations, and local stakeholders contribute to defining problems, exploring alternatives, and selecting solutions, remains partial in many Mediterranean territories.

Limited institutional capacity for engagement

Many local and regional authorities, particularly in small and medium-sized municipalities, lack the technical expertise, human resources, and dedicated budgets required to design and run effective engagement processes. Skills such as facilitation, conflict mediation, behavioural design, accessible communication, and digital participation are often not part of standard administrative training. As a result, engagement activities risk being underfunded, episodic, and disconnected from formal planning cycles. The absence of dedicated staff or one-stop participation units further limits continuity and learning across initiatives.

Reaching diverse and underrepresented groups

Mediterranean societies are characterised by significant diversity in terms of age, gender, income, education, language, migration background, and territorial setting (urban, rural, island, coastal, mountainous). Standard engagement methods - public meetings, written consultations, online surveys - tend to attract a relatively narrow segment of the population, typically already-active citizens with the time, confidence, and digital access to participate. Engaging young people, older residents, women, low-income households, migrant communities, and inhabitants of remote or peripheral areas requires tailored methodologies, trusted intermediaries, and sustained outreach. Without such efforts, participatory processes risk reproducing existing inequalities rather than addressing them.

Trust deficits and competing narratives

Trust between citizens and public institutions is unevenly distributed across the Mediterranean and has been further strained by overlapping crises - economic, public-health, energy-related, and climate-related. Green transition projects frequently encounter resistance not because of disagreement with their objectives, but because of mistrust regarding the intentions of the actors driving them, the fairness of cost and benefit distribution, or the credibility of long-term commitments. At the same time, mis- and disinformation about climate policies, renewable energy installations, mobility restrictions, or urban regeneration projects can polarise public debate and complicate engagement. Building and maintaining trust requires transparency, consistency, and the demonstration of tangible results in the short term.

Cultural and linguistic diversity across Mediterranean territories

The Mediterranean basin is characterised by a remarkable cultural and linguistic richness, with strong local identities, traditional knowledge systems, and place-based practices. While this diversity is an asset for the green transition - offering multiple entry points for engagement and grounding sustainability narratives in shared heritage - it also requires engagement approaches that are culturally sensitive and adaptable. One-size-fits-all methodologies imported from other contexts often fail to resonate with local populations. Effective engagement in MED territories typically combines a common methodological backbone with significant local tailoring of language, formats, settings, and partner networks.

Disconnect between engagement, planning, and financing

A persistent challenge across MED territories is the weak integration of community engagement into formal planning instruments and financing decisions. Strategic documents such as Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs), spatial plans, or regional development strategies increasingly include participatory components, but these are rarely systematically linked to investment pipelines, project preparation, or budget allocations. As a result, engagement outputs - ideas, priorities, proposed solutions - frequently remain unimplemented, eroding citizens' willingness to participate in future processes. Closing this loop, by ensuring that engagement informs concrete decisions and that outcomes are reported back to communities, is a key condition for sustained participation.

Sustaining engagement beyond project cycles

Many participatory processes in the Mediterranean are launched within the framework of time-bound European or national projects. While these projects allow for significant innovation and learning, they often struggle to ensure continuity once funding ends. Local engagement structures, networks of active citizens, living labs, or thematic working groups risk losing momentum without institutional anchoring, dedicated resources, or integration into regular administrative practices. The challenge is therefore not only to design effective engagement experiences, but also to embed them in stable governance arrangements capable of carrying community-led action forward.

Underutilisation of digital and behavioural tools

The toolkit available to public authorities for engaging communities has expanded significantly in recent years, with the emergence of digital participation platforms, civic crowdfunding tools, behavioural and nudging approaches, gamification, sensory and cultural interventions, and AI-assisted analysis of public input. However, the uptake of these tools in Mediterranean territories remains uneven, due to limited awareness, regulatory uncertainties (notably around data protection), digital divides, and the absence of trusted intermediaries capable of accompanying public authorities in their adoption. Bridging this gap is essential to scale engagement processes beyond traditional formats and to reach broader and more diverse audiences.

3. Tools for improving community engagement in the green transition

Addressing the challenges outlined above requires a comprehensive set of tools that enable public authorities and project developers to design, run, and institutionalise meaningful engagement processes. Drawing on the experiences of the projects examined in this paper, these tools can be grouped into seven complementary categories. The most effective engagement strategies typically combine several of these categories, adapting their balance to the specific context, scale, and objective of the initiative.

Co-design and co-creation methodologies

Co-design and co-creation methodologies enable citizens, public authorities, technical experts, and civil society to work jointly on identifying needs, framing problems, generating ideas, and shaping solutions. Tools in this category include design-thinking workshops, structured co-creation sessions, scenario-building exercises, and people-centred design protocols. These approaches are particularly relevant for nature-based solutions, public-space transformation, and integrated regeneration projects, where the alignment of technical, environmental, and social objectives benefits from continuous dialogue. Methodologies developed within Euro-MED projects place particular emphasis on early stakeholder involvement, iterative cycles of feedback, and the explicit mapping of trade-offs between competing priorities.

Living labs and real-life experimentation

Living labs provide spaces - physical, virtual, or hybrid - in which solutions can be co-developed and tested under real conditions, with continuous involvement of users and stakeholders. They are particularly suited to complex challenges such as the deployment of renewable energy communities, the integration of nature-based solutions in urban environments, or the redesign of public space. Living labs combine experimentation with structured learning, allowing public authorities to refine solutions before scaling them up and to build local networks of practitioners and active citizens. Mediterranean experiences highlight the value of multi-site living-lab networks, which enable transnational comparison, peer learning, and adaptation of solutions to diverse territorial contexts.

Tactical urbanism and pilot interventions

Tactical urbanism uses temporary, low-cost, high-impact interventions - such as the temporary pedestrianisation of streets, school streets, pop-up green spaces, or modular street furniture - to test and demonstrate new uses of public space in collaboration with residents. The approach mobilises a learning-by-doing logic, where citizens experience the proposed change directly before decisions on permanent transformations are taken. This reduces resistance, builds local ownership, and generates evidence on actual usage and impact. For small and medium-sized Mediterranean towns and neighbourhoods, tactical urbanism offers an accessible entry point to participatory urban transformation, particularly when paired with capacity development of public administrations and structured engagement of schools, businesses, and community associations.

Behavioural, sensory, and cultural engagement

A growing body of practice within Euro-MED projects applies behavioural science to the design of green policies, using nudges - subtle changes in choice architecture - to make sustainable options easier, more visible, or more attractive. These approaches are increasingly enriched by sensory and cultural dimensions: engaging citizens through what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, and connecting climate action to local cultural identity, gastronomy, art, and heritage. Such methods are particularly relevant in the Mediterranean, where strong cultural and sensory traditions provide rich entry points for engagement. Behavioural and cultural tools complement information campaigns and regulatory measures by addressing the emotional, habitual, and identity-related dimensions of behaviour change.

Digital participation and civic crowdfunding platforms

Digital tools have substantially expanded the reach and depth of community engagement. Online deliberation platforms, mapping applications, participatory dashboards, and feedback systems enable broader and more flexible participation, in particular for groups that find it difficult to attend physical meetings. Civic crowdfunding tools allow citizens to contribute financially to projects they support, complementing public funding with private commitments and strengthening the sense of ownership. Hybrid platforms that combine crowdsourcing of ideas, deliberation, participatory budgeting, and crowdfunding represent an emerging frontier, allowing public authorities to integrate the full participation cycle - from problem definition to co-financing - in a single user experience. The deployment of such tools requires attention to digital inclusion, data protection, and the quality of moderation.

Participatory budgeting and citizen-led financing

Participatory budgeting allows citizens to directly influence the allocation of a defined share of public resources, including investments related to climate, energy, mobility, and urban regeneration. When sustainability criteria are explicitly embedded in the process - through eligibility rules, scoring grids, or thematic envelopes - participatory budgeting becomes a powerful instrument to align community priorities with green transition objectives. Beyond the budgetary allocation itself, the process strengthens civic capacity, supports the emergence of local project promoters, and builds confidence in public institutions. Combined with civic crowdfunding and cooperative models such as renewable energy communities, citizen-led financing tools open new pathways for shared investment in the green transition.

Capacity building for public authorities and intermediaries

The effective use of the tools described above depends on the capacities of public authorities, intermediaries, and local stakeholders. Capacity-building programmes developed within Euro-MED projects typically combine training modules, peer-learning activities, study visits, mentoring, and the provision of structured methodological materials. Particular emphasis is placed on the practical skills required to design engagement processes - facilitation, communication, conflict management, behavioural design, monitoring and evaluation - as well as on strategic competences such as embedding engagement into planning instruments and financing strategies. Capacity-building activities targeted at small and medium-sized municipalities, which often lack dedicated

participation teams, are particularly important to ensure that innovative engagement practices are not concentrated in a few large cities.

Governance frameworks and institutional anchoring

Tools and methodologies need to be embedded in governance arrangements that support continuity, coherence, and accountability. This includes integrating engagement into formal planning cycles (SECAPs, SUMPs, spatial plans), creating multi-actor working groups that meet regularly, designating responsible focal points within administrations, and establishing mechanisms for feeding citizen input back into decision-making. The Ecosystemic Transition Unit (ETU) model promoted within the GLA Mission provides a reference framework for such anchoring, articulating planning, communities, governance, and facilities into a coherent territorial transition unit. Effective governance also requires alignment between local, regional, national, and EU levels, ensuring that engagement at one scale is recognised and supported by the others.

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Finally, robust monitoring and evaluation tools are essential to ensure that engagement activities deliver real value and are continuously improved. Indicators in this area typically combine quantitative metrics - such as the number and diversity of participants, the share of proposals taken up in formal decisions, or the volume of co-financing mobilised - with qualitative assessments of perceived legitimacy, learning, and impact on public trust. Sharing evaluation results across projects, territories, and countries supports collective learning and helps refine engagement practices. Monitoring frameworks are most effective when they are co-designed with stakeholders, when their results are openly published, and when they explicitly inform the next iteration of engagement processes.

4. How the Interreg Euro-MED Green Living Areas Mission supports local public authorities

The Interreg Euro-MED Green Living Areas Mission brings together a diverse portfolio of projects that collectively provide a comprehensive **ETU toolbox** to support local public authorities in planning, implementing, and sustaining community engagement for the green transition. The Mission is structured around the **E**cosystemic **T**ransition H**u**b (ETU) model, an integrated approach that connects energy planning, energy communities, energy governance, and energy facilities, and that places citizens and stakeholders at the centre of the transition process. Within this framework, the C4LA project ensures that knowledge, methodologies, and tools developed by individual projects are consolidated, shared, and made transferable across Mediterranean territories.

The six projects featured in this JTP - **URWAN, RECinMED, Streets for Citizens, NUDGES, CO2PACMAN, and BAUHAUS4MED** - approach community engagement from complementary angles, addressing different sectors (water and nature-based solutions, energy, public space and mobility, behavioural change, climate-neutral islands, and aesthetic regeneration) and different stages of the engagement cycle (awareness, co-design, pilot implementation, scaling, and policy integration). Together, they offer a structured set of approaches and tools that can be adapted and combined to fit the needs of diverse territories.

URWAN — Urban Regenerative Water Avant-garde

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URWAN

URWAN addresses drought and water-related climate impacts in Mediterranean cities through Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for urban regeneration, deployed across a network of partner territories spanning Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project places community-driven design at the core of its approach, combining the technical expertise required to plan and implement NbS with structured participatory processes that engage residents, schools, civil-society organisations, and local administrations. Beyond delivering improved water management, URWAN demonstrates how NbS can simultaneously enhance the aesthetic quality of public space, foster social inclusion, and strengthen the capacity of local authorities to plan resilient urban transformations.

From a community engagement perspective, URWAN provides:

- **Co-design methodology for nature-based solutions —** a structured approach that involves citizens and local stakeholders from the early identification of water-related challenges through to the design and validation of NbS interventions, ensuring that proposed solutions reflect local needs, knowledge, and priorities.
- **Living-lab approach —** real-life testing of NbS in urban and peri-urban environments, allowing solutions to be refined in collaboration with users and adapted to specific Mediterranean conditions before scaling.

- **Training kits for NbS implementation —** capacity-building materials targeted at planners, technicians, and community facilitators, designed to support the replication of co-designed NbS across MED territories.
- **Serious-game tools —** interactive instruments that help diverse audiences explore trade-offs, test alternative scenarios, and engage with technical aspects of NbS in an accessible way.
- **NbS catalogue and replication framework —** a portfolio of solutions documented with sufficient detail to support transfer and adaptation by other municipalities, accompanied by guidance on stakeholder engagement at each stage of the project cycle.

RECinMED — Inclusive Renewable Energy Communities in the Mediterranean Region

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RECinMED

RECinMED addresses the establishment and good functioning of inclusive Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) across nine Mediterranean countries. Renewable energy communities are by nature community-driven structures: they require sustained engagement of citizens, local businesses, and public authorities to identify suitable sites, define governance arrangements, mobilise financing, and operate energy installations over the long term. RECinMED tests innovative solutions to overcome the technical, regulatory, financial, and social barriers that constrain the diffusion of RECs in MED territories, with particular attention to rural areas, islands, and contexts with limited prior experience of cooperative energy initiatives.

From a community engagement perspective, RECinMED provides:

- **Cooperation models for inclusive RECs —** frameworks for organising the involvement of citizens, municipalities, businesses, and intermediaries in the creation and operation of energy communities, with explicit attention to the inclusion of vulnerable groups and households at risk of energy poverty.
- **Capacity-building activities for local authorities and citizens —** training and peer-learning materials supporting public officials and community members in the practical steps of setting up and managing a REC, drawing on successful experiences across the Mediterranean.
- **Pilot projects in islands and rural areas —** concrete experiences in territories such as Mediterranean islands and inland municipalities, providing replicable examples of how community engagement can be structured around shared energy infrastructure.
- **Transnational REC network —** a cooperation platform that connects emerging and established energy communities, allowing peer exchange, joint problem-solving, and policy dialogue at the Mediterranean scale.
- **Guidance on local fiscal and regulatory tools for RECs —** consolidating lessons from previous initiatives on how local taxation, simplified procedures, and dedicated municipal support can foster citizen-led renewable energy projects.

Streets for Citizens — Tactical Urbanism for sustainable mobility and liveable public spaces

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

Streets for Citizens

Streets for Citizens empowers public authorities and related entities in small and medium-sized Mediterranean towns to engage citizens in transforming streets and public spaces. Confronted with high rates of car ownership, traffic-related risks, and a shortage of quality public space, the project applies the principles of tactical urbanism: temporary, low-cost, high-impact interventions that demonstrate the benefits of safer, greener, and more inclusive streets and that are co-designed with residents, schools, businesses, and community organisations. The project is explicitly aligned with the New European Bauhaus initiative and operates on a learning-by-doing principle, ensuring that capacities for participatory street transformation remain in the territory after the project ends.

From a community engagement perspective, Streets for Citizens provides:

- **Tactical urbanism methodology adapted to MED towns —** a structured approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating temporary interventions in collaboration with citizens, with specific attention to the conditions of small and medium-sized urban areas.
- **Participatory tools and design-thinking protocols —** instruments to identify active citizens at an early stage, organise co-design sessions, and ensure people-centred outcomes for streets and public spaces.
- **Capacity-development programme for public authorities —** training and accompaniment for municipal staff in small and medium-sized towns, building the competences needed to initiate and sustain bottom-up interventions in mobility and public space.
- **Pilot interventions and replication patterns —** examples such as school streets, reclaimed car-dominated areas, and walkability-oriented redesigns, documented in a way that supports replication in other Mediterranean contexts.
- **Communication and campaign templates —** locally adaptable messages and visual materials that support citizen mobilisation around themes such as safer streets, walkability, and human-centred public space.

NUDGES — Behavioural and sensory strategies for urban climate policies

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NUDGES

NUDGES is a study project that explores how behavioural strategies - and in particular nudging - can be integrated into the urban climate policies of Mediterranean local, regional, and national authorities. Building on the recognition that a large share of greenhouse-gas emissions is linked to lifestyle choices, the project addresses the gap between climate awareness and everyday sustainable behaviour. It delivers six proofs of concept across eight MED countries, comparing nudging interventions with cultural interventions and using a distinctive sensory approach that engages citizens through sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The project explicitly connects

climate action to cultural identity, sensory experience, and place-based traditions, recognising these as powerful drivers of behaviour change in the Mediterranean.

From a community engagement perspective, NUDGES provides:

- **Action-research methodology for behavioural and cultural interventions —** a structured framework for designing, implementing, and evaluating nudges in real urban environments, applicable to a range of policy fields including mobility, energy, food, and waste.
- **Six pilot proofs of concept across the Mediterranean —** tested interventions linking each of the five senses to a specific climate-related behaviour (for example, the sense of taste connected to the Mediterranean diet, or sensory cues linked to waste-reduction practices).
- **Feasibility study on nudging in MED urban climate policies —** consolidated evidence on what works and under what conditions in Mediterranean contexts, including a comparative analysis of nudging and cultural strategies.
- **NUDGES Manifesto and transferability plan —** policy-oriented documents that articulate principles, conditions, and pathways for integrating nudging into local, regional, and national policy frameworks.
- **Community of interest on behavioural climate action —** a transnational network of practitioners, researchers, and policymakers committed to scaling behavioural and sensory approaches across the MED area.

CO2 PACMAN — Cooperation and co-designing partnership for climate neutrality on Mediterranean islands

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

CO2 PACMAN

CO2 PACMAN focuses on the decarbonisation of Mediterranean islands and on how island communities can contribute to, and benefit from, the green transition. Coordinated by the University of Siena, the project provides knowledge and tools to support the implementation of integrated mitigation and adaptation strategies, while engaging public authorities, citizens, and stakeholders in the co-creation of climate-neutral island scenarios. CO2 PACMAN gives particular attention to the specific characteristics of islands - including their high exposure to climate impacts, their dependence on imported energy, their reliance on tourism, and the strength of their community bonds - and uses these as entry points for inclusive engagement and policy innovation.

From a community engagement perspective, CO2 PACMAN provides:

- **Rooting Labs methodology —** a series of place-based, multi-day engagement events held on test-bed islands and connected mainland sites, bringing together administrators, academia, businesses, schools, and citizens to co-design pathways toward climate neutrality.
- **Co-creation of climate-neutral island scenarios —** structured processes that integrate greenhouse-gas inventories, citizen surveys, and stakeholder dialogue into shared visions for the future of each island.

- **Youth Think Tank and school-based engagement —** dedicated activities involving high-school and university students in peer-to-peer formats, ensuring that younger generations contribute to the design of long-term transition strategies.
- **Communication and outreach formats —** including a dedicated podcast and public events that translate climate-neutrality challenges into accessible narratives for island communities and broader Mediterranean audiences.
- **Policy integration and capitalisation tools —** frameworks for connecting community-driven scenarios with regional policy processes, drawing on outcomes from previous initiatives such as Interreg MED BLUE DEAL and COMPOSE Plus.

BAUHAUS4MED — New European Bauhaus solutions for participatory green transformation

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BAUHAUS4MED

BAUHAUS4MED tests innovative solutions inspired by the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, integrating sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetic quality into urban transformation processes across five Mediterranean territories. The project mobilises a network of regions, municipalities, technical partners, and supporting experts to identify participatory green community challenges, co-create solutions through crowdsourcing, co-finance them through civic crowdfunding, and implement them via participatory budgeting. Its flagship instrument, the CROWDVOCACY tool, brings together crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, and participative-democracy principles in a single digital environment, building on the experience of the previous Interreg MED BLUE CROWDFUNDING project.

From a community engagement perspective, BAUHAUS4MED provides:

- **CROWDVOCACY digital tool —** an integrated platform combining crowdsourcing of ideas, civic crowdfunding, and participatory budgeting, supporting the full engagement cycle from problem identification to co-financed implementation.
- **Civic crowdfunding methodology —** step-by-step guidance for designing, launching, and managing civic crowdfunding campaigns aligned with sustainability and aesthetic principles, including transferable training material.
- **Participatory budgeting in the spirit of the New European Bauhaus —** frameworks that combine sustainability and aesthetic criteria in the selection and implementation of citizen-led projects, tested in five regions and cities across the Mediterranean.
- **Co-creation spaces for multi-actor green transformation —** settings in which politicians, architects, landscape architects, artists, students, entrepreneurs, and designers work together to redesign buildings and public spaces according to NEB principles.
- **Green transformation action plans and best-practice catalogue —** regional and city-level plans grounded in participatory and aesthetic principles, accompanied by a transferable toolbox of best examples and lessons learned to support replication across MED territories.

The combined results of the six projects offer concrete operational support to local and regional authorities in the drafting, adoption, and implementation of the three planning instruments that most directly structure the green transition at the municipal level: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

(SUMPs), Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), and Urban Greening Plans (or, more broadly, nature-based urban plans aligned with the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Nature Restoration Regulation). Although these instruments differ in scope and regulatory anchoring, they share a common requirement that is often the most difficult to meet in practice: meaningful, structured, and continuous engagement of citizens and local stakeholders across the full planning cycle - from diagnosis and vision-building, through measure design and prioritisation, to implementation, monitoring, and revision.

For **SUMPs,** the tactical urbanism methodology, participatory tools, and capacity-development programme of Streets for Citizens provide ready-to-use approaches for co-designing modal-shift measures, school streets, and public-space reallocations, while the behavioural and sensory interventions tested by NUDGES help municipalities move beyond awareness campaigns toward measures that actually change daily mobility choices. **For SECAPs**, the cooperation models, capacity-building activities, and pilot experiences of RECinMED operationalise the citizen-energy dimension that is increasingly central to climate action plans, while CO2 PACMAN's Rooting Labs and co-created climate-neutrality scenarios offer a structured way to anchor SECAP baselines, targets, and measure portfolios in shared territorial visions, particularly in island and coastal contexts. For **Urban Greening Plans and nature-based urban planning**, URWAN's co-design methodology, living-lab approach, NbS catalogue, and training kits provide a complete toolkit for the participatory identification, design, and validation of nature-based interventions, complemented by BAUHAUS4MED's CROWDVOCACY tool, civic crowdfunding methodology, and participatory budgeting framework, which allow citizens not only to shape but also to co-finance and aesthetically qualify the resulting transformations.

Taken together, these contributions allow public authorities to address one of the most persistent weaknesses of SUMPs, SECAPs, and Urban Greening Plans in the Mediterranean context: the gap between the participatory ambitions stated in the planning documents and the engagement capacities actually mobilised on the ground. **By integrating these tested methodologies into their planning cycles, municipalities can strengthen the legitimacy of their plans, improve the quality and acceptability of the measures selected, and build the local coalitions needed to sustain implementation well beyond the timeframe of any individual project.**

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Best solutions of the GLA Mission projects

From tools to pilot experiences



5. Best solutions of the GLA Mission projects: from tools to pilot experiences

Building on the mapping presented in the previous section, this section introduces the flagship solutions of the six projects in greater depth, together with the pilot experiences through which they have been tested in real Mediterranean territories. The solutions presented here are documented in the catalogue of the ETU Initiative platform (etuinitiative.eu), developed under the C4LA project, where each solution is described in a standardised format and linked to the territories in which it has been applied ("Solutions in Action"). For each project, the subsections below describe what the flagship solution is, how it works in practice, and what the pilot experiences reveal about its added value, transferability, and the conditions required for replication in other Mediterranean contexts.

5.1 BAUHAUS4MED: CROWDVOCACY – Digital Platform for Citizen Participation in Co-Creating Green Areas

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BAUHAUS4MED

CROWDVOCACY — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Community Engagement	Nature Urban Plan / Urban Greening Plan	Social · Technological	Urban Areas · Rural Areas
TYPE OF TOOL	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Online platform	Green Living Areas	BAUHAUS4MED project	Crowdpolicy
Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · etuinitiative.eu/solutions/crowdvocacy			

CROWDVOCACY is a participatory multi-platform developed within the BAUHAUS4MED project to support institutional public–private partnerships in building local engagement nodes and in launching and implementing open calls for green community challenges. The platform enables citizens to engage directly in the co-creation of green spaces and other urban solutions: participants submit proposals for urban projects, discuss them with the wider community, and vote on the initiatives they wish to see implemented, fostering deliberative and participatory democracy through accessible online tools. In the ETU solutions catalogue, CROWDVOCACY is classified under the Community Engagement theme as an online platform suitable for both urban and rural territories, contributing to the social and technological pillars of the Ecosystemic Transition Unit model.

The tool upgrades the results of the previous Interreg MED BLUE CROWDFUNDING project into a single digital environment combining crowdsourcing, civic crowdfunding, and participative-democracy principles. Its operational deployment (b4m.space) was developed by the project partners Platoniq and Crowdpolicy on the open-source Decidim framework and is available in English, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, and Bosnian, reflecting the languages of the pilot territories. The platform is organised around participatory processes, assemblies, conferences, and meetings, and offers surveys, proposal collection, commenting, deliberation, and voting functionalities, together with an open-data section that makes participation results transparent and reusable. Its thematic scopes mirror the New European Bauhaus orientation of the project, ranging from REconstruction and REuse to REgreening, RESilience, and REvitalisation.

From the perspective of a public authority, CROWDVOCACY supports the full engagement cycle through the following core functionalities:

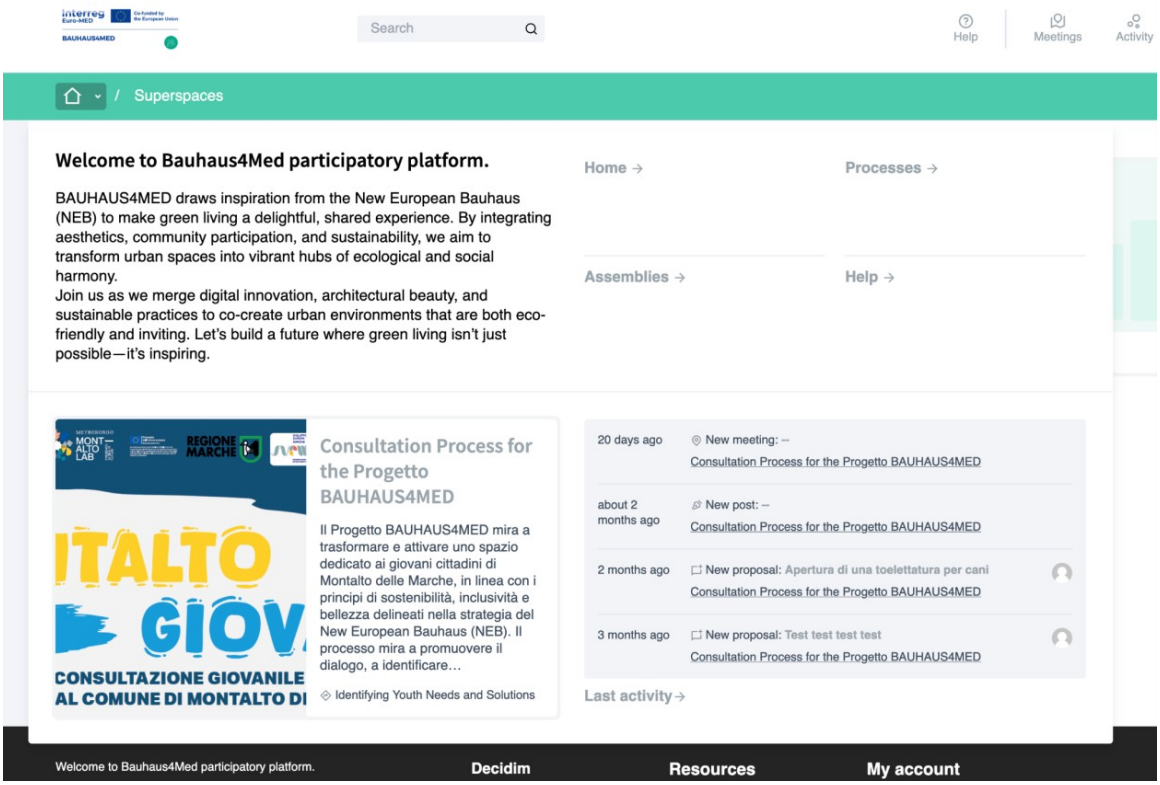
- **Crowdsourcing of ideas —** open calls through which citizens and stakeholders submit proposals responding to locally defined green community challenges, supported by surveys and structured consultation phases.
- **Deliberation and mixed evaluation —** commenting and debate on submitted proposals, combined with transparent selection procedures; in the Thessaloniki open call, proposals were assessed through a combined score of 60% expert and 40% citizen evaluation.
- **Civic crowdfunding and participatory budgeting —** mechanisms allowing citizens to co-finance selected solutions and to influence the allocation of dedicated implementation budgets, closing the loop between idea generation and realisation.
- **Support to local nodes and partnerships —** a dedicated dashboard supporting institutional public–private partnerships in coordinating regional stakeholder groups and in managing the launch and implementation of open calls.
- **Transparency and transferability —** an open-source code base, a multilingual interface, and open data on participation, enabling other municipalities and regions to replicate the approach at limited cost.

In practice, the platform is designed to be combined with offline engagement formats — co-design workshops, design competitions, festivals, and site visits — so that digital participation amplifies rather than replaces face-to-face interaction. Within BAUHAUS4MED, it is complemented by the NEB Self-Assessment Tool, which allows communities and institutions to evaluate the alignment of their initiatives with New European Bauhaus principles and to identify pathways for improvement.

How the tool is used in practice — On the ground, CROWDVOCACY works as a single citizen journey across its three components. On the Decidim platform (hosted at b4m.space), citizens create a profile, submit proposals for urban and green-space projects, discuss them with the community, and vote on the initiatives they want to see; through Goteo, the community can then co-finance the selected projects via crowdfunding campaigns based on a match-funding model; and the B4M Dashboard aggregates open data from both, allowing citizens and authorities to follow funding progress, participation, and impact in real time — creating a feedback loop in which dashboard insights feed back into new and improved proposals.

For public authorities, a dedicated admin dashboard handles the practical side of running a process: registering and authorising participants (including bulk import via CSV), setting each pilot's own language, and grouping a pilot's assemblies and participatory processes into a single "Superspace"

for coherent management. A dedicated Decidim Kids flow additionally enables the safe, tutor-validated participation of minors, as tested in the Montalto delle Marche pilot.



The BAUHAUS4MED participatory platform (b4m.space), built on Decidim, where citizens submit, discuss, and vote on proposals. Source: BAUHAUS4MED Deliverable D.1.1.1.

The figure below summarises how these functionalities can be embedded across the preparation cycle of the three planning instruments most relevant to the GLA Mission — Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans, and Urban Greening Plans — indicating, for each stage, the corresponding step in each planning framework and the CROWDVOCACY functionalities that deliver the greatest added value.

CROWDVOCACY ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — SUMP · SECAP · URBAN GREENING PLAN			
Functionalities: ① Crowdsourcing of ideas · ② Deliberation and mixed evaluation · ③ Civic crowdfunding and participatory budgeting · ④ Support to local nodes and partnerships · ⑤ Transparency and open data			
PLANNING STAGE	**SUMP (ELTIS CYCLE)**	**SECAP (COVENANT OF MAYORS)**	**URBAN GREENING PLAN**
1. Preparation and stakeholder mobilisation ④ ⑤	Set-up of working structures and stakeholder mapping in Phase 1 (Preparation and analysis).	Political commitment, climate team and mobilisation of the stakeholder group (Initiation).	Commitment and set-up of the multi-actor greening partnership (Getting started).
2. Diagnosis and shared vision ① ②	Surveys and map-based input on mobility problems; deliberation on scenarios and the common vision (Phases 1–2).	Citizen input to the Baseline Emission Inventory and the Risk and Vulnerability Assessment; shared climate vision (Planning).	Participatory assessment of green-space needs and ecosystem services; greening vision (Assess and plan).
3. Action planning and prioritisation ① ②	Open calls for measure ideas; mixed expert–citizen evaluation and voting on measure packages (Phase 3: Measure planning).	Crowdsourcing and prioritisation of mitigation and adaptation actions before plan adoption.	Co-design of nature-based solutions and selection of greening interventions (as piloted in BAUHAUS4MED).
4. Implementation and co-financing ③ ④	Participatory budgets and civic crowdfunding for quick-win measures such as school streets and tactical interventions (Phase 4).	Co-financing of community energy and climate actions; dedicated climate participatory budgets (Implementation).	Civic crowdfunding and participatory budgeting of green-space transformations (Implementation).
5. Monitoring, feedback and reporting ① ⑤	Citizen feedback surveys and open participation data informing monitoring and plan revision.	Periodic citizen surveys feeding the two-year Covenant of Mayors monitoring and reporting cycle.	Community-based monitoring of greening outcomes; transparent reporting of results.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on the ELTIS SUMP Guidelines, the Covenant of Mayors SECAP cycle, and EU Urban Greening Plan guidance. CROWDVOCACY was piloted on green-space and regeneration challenges; its application to SUMP and SECAP processes is a direct transfer enabled by the generic architecture of the platform.			

CROWDVOCACY in action: pilot experiences in five Mediterranean territories

CROWDVOCACY was tested in the five BAUHAUS4MED pilot territories — Tuscany and Marche in Italy, the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece, the City of Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Municipality of Burgas in Bulgaria. In each territory, the digital platform was combined with locally tailored offline engagement, following a common sequence of challenge identification, crowdsourcing of ideas, deliberation and selection, co-financing, and implementation through participatory budgets. The pilots, documented as "Solutions in Action" on the ETU platform (etuinitiative.eu/pilots), provide complementary lessons on how the same tool adapts to very different territorial settings.

Minucciano, Tuscany (Italy) — In the inner Garfagnana area, the small municipality of Minucciano — confronted with depopulation and socio-economic decline — became the centre of a collaborative regeneration process involving the Region of Tuscany, the municipal administration, the University of Florence (DIDA), private-sector actors, and local communities, formalised through an inter-institutional agreement. Residents contributed to identifying local needs, challenges, and opportunities through World Café participatory workshops, and their inputs were translated into concrete design proposals by university students specialising in sustainable architecture. Local enterprises supported community initiatives as part of their social and environmental responsibility, while CROWDVOCACY enabled citizens to vote on and co-finance local projects, blending online and offline participation. The experience, analysed in a dedicated GLA Mission policy brief, shows how participatory regeneration can evolve from a local experiment into a structured, transferable governance approach for small inland municipalities.

Montalto delle Marche, Marche Region (Italy) — The Marche pilot focused on transforming and activating a space dedicated to the young citizens of Montalto delle Marche, in line with the sustainability, inclusion, and beauty principles of the New European Bauhaus. A structured consultation process hosted on the platform supported the identification of youth needs and the co-design of solutions, establishing a direct dialogue between the municipality and a target group — young residents of a small inland town — that standard engagement formats typically struggle to reach.

Former Kodra military camp, Thessaloniki – Region of Central Macedonia (Greece) — In the metropolitan area of Thessaloniki, the Region of Central Macedonia used CROWDVOCACY to launch an open call on the regeneration and adaptive reuse of the former Kodra military camp, a large urban site of strategic interest explored by the partnership as a potential living laboratory. Citizens and experts submitted and discussed proposals — including the co-creation of a green, inclusive metropolitan park — which were assessed through the combined 60% expert and 40% citizen score; the top-ranked ideas advanced to an ideation hackathon in Thessaloniki. The pilot illustrates how digital open calls can structure public debate on complex, large-scale urban regeneration sites.

Breka neighbourhood, Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) — The City of Sarajevo, in cooperation with the Association of Landscape Architects of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Municipality of Centar, applied the approach to the revitalisation of a neglected public space in the Breka neighbourhood. A participatory design process culminated in a competition whose three awarded teams were publicly honoured by the Mayor in September 2025, and the pilot was accompanied by a local Bauhaus4MED festival celebrating landscape architecture and New European Bauhaus

values. The process has been presented by the city as an example of how the shared vision of citizens, experts, and institutions can transform a neglected space into a functional, sustainable, and aesthetically appealing urban area.

Burgas (Bulgaria) — The Municipality of Burgas implemented the process "Renovating through Democracy", addressing the co-design and co-creation of public spaces in a climate-vulnerable urban territory exposed to extreme summer heat, strong winds, and deteriorating air quality. The pilot followed a structured ten-step pathway: selection of the target territory; establishment of a coordination unit comprising a project manager, architects, and a public-relations expert; an online questionnaire and in-person meetings with residents; the design and public discussion of a renovation concept; its review by the Local Resilience and Climate Adaptation Unit acting as the local node; the preparation of a detailed technical concept; and implementation works involving local stakeholders in greening activities and local artists in decorating parts of the territory. The Burgas pilot demonstrates how digital consultation can be systematically embedded in the formal preparation of a municipal renovation investment.

Beyond the individual territories, the platform also hosts a transnational peer-review process through which partners and citizens assess each pilot solution using structured evaluation forms, supporting mutual learning and quality assurance across the partnership. The project's Sprint Event — an ideation bootcamp concluded in Thessaloniki in December 2025 — attracted more than thirty ideas and eleven finalist teams from all partner countries; the winning proposals, including the NEB-based redesign of the Kodra camp, the reuse of Minucciano's marble waste (Soham), and a digital strategy for the inland areas of Garfagnana (Min.uti), received mentoring from the consortium and support towards the New European Bauhaus Rising Stars competition, with the awarded ideas showcased at the project's final conference in Florence in May 2026. The pilot experiences also consolidate a set of transferable lessons: integrated planning, strong political commitment, capacity building, and multi-level cooperation emerge as key enablers, while administrative complexity, the limited technical capacity of small municipalities, citizens' scepticism towards new initiatives, and unstable access to funding remain the main barriers to scaling up.

5.2 Streets for Citizens: Euro-MED Toolkit of Tactical Urbanism

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

Streets for Citizens

EURO-MED TOOLKIT OF TACTICAL URBANISM — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Green Mobility · Community Engagement	SUMP · Nature Urban Plan	Organisational · Social · Territorial	Urban · Peri-urban Areas
TYPE OF SOLUTION	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Toolkit ·	Green Living Areas	Streets for Citizens	Enviromental Park

Methodology			(Italy)

Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · Streets for Citizens

The Euro-MED Toolkit of Tactical Urbanism is the flagship solution of the Streets for Citizens project. **Tactical urbanism refers to low-cost, temporary, and reversible interventions — including pop-up urbanism and placemaking — that allow local actors to test how streets and public spaces can be reclaimed from cars and returned to people before committing substantial resources.** The toolkit combines developed and tested approaches to support easy transfer across territories: it provides step-by-step processes for designing tactical urbanism solutions, together with a catalogue of equipment and materials, and serves as a hands-on resource for planning and implementing adaptable urban interventions. In the ETU solutions catalogue it is classified under the Green Mobility and Green Community Engagement themes, contributes to the organisational, social, and territorial pillars of the Ecosystemic Transition Unit model, and is designed to support the realisation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and Nature Urban Plans.

Community engagement is placed at the centre of the solution rather than added at the margins. The project as a whole is structured around a "learn, show, and tell" logic and three pillars — building a knowledge base, empowering partners to design solutions, and testing them through small-scale pilots — with the active participation of citizens described as central to all three. A **dedicated people-centred approach practical guide** sets out how to involve residents and businesses in co-designing and testing interventions, complemented by **training materials** and a study with a **good-practice catalogue**. By embedding participatory tools, design thinking, and digital solutions, the toolkit reduces the burden on local authorities in small and medium towns while fostering greater engagement among communities and businesses. Because the interventions are temporary and inexpensive, citizens can directly experience and shape the transformation of a street before any permanent decision is taken, which makes participation tangible and helps build trust and acceptance.

The toolkit is modular and can be adapted to local needs. It builds on territorial "roll-up" mobility action plans that translate long-term strategies into concrete demonstration actions for each partner city, and it is primarily dedicated to local authorities, urban planners, designers, community groups, and NGOs, especially in urban and peri-urban areas, though it can also be applied in rural and coastal territories. Implementation requires basic data on local public spaces, mobility patterns, and community needs, together with political support and competences in urban planning, stakeholder engagement, and project coordination. Its added value lies in offering a ready-to-use, low-cost framework that enables quick implementation, encourages stakeholder collaboration and community involvement, and supports capacity building for experimenting with sustainable urban solutions. As of 2026 the toolkit is in its final development phase, consolidating the lessons of the project's pilot actions.

How to use the solution in practice.

For a municipality or regional authority wishing to replicate the approach, the Streets for Citizens results form a complete, sequenced implementation pathway. Each deliverable and output of the project corresponds to one step of the journey from first idea to permanent policy uptake, so the solution can be applied in practice by following the project's own logic of "learn, show, and tell".

The starting point is the baseline study with its catalogue of good practices, which documents tested tactical urbanism interventions from across the Mediterranean. Authorities can use it to benchmark their own situation, identify the intervention types most relevant to their challenge – school streets, reclaimed parking areas, greening and cooling measures, walkability redesigns – and build the argument for political support.

The practical guide on the people-centred approach explains how to identify active citizens at an early stage, organise co-design sessions with residents, schools, and businesses, and apply design-thinking protocols so that the intervention responds to real local needs. This step anchors the process in the community before any physical measure is installed and is the core community-engagement element of the solution. The training and capacity-building materials developed for municipal staff in small and medium-sized towns transfer the facilitation, planning, and communication competences needed to run the process in-house. Working through them ensures that the capacity for participatory street transformation remains in the territory after the intervention – the project's learning-by-doing principle. Using the territorial "roll-up" mobility action plan methodology, the authority translates its long-term strategic framework – typically the SUMP or an urban greening plan – into a concrete, sited, and budgeted demonstration action, defining the location, the measures, the stakeholders, and the evaluation approach.

The Euro-MED Toolkit of Tactical Urbanism then guides implementation, providing the step-by-step process for designing the intervention together with the catalogue of equipment and materials – planting containers, modular seating, murals, playful and cooling elements – as demonstrated in the Ptuj pilot and the other partner towns. Because the measures are temporary and low-cost, they can be adjusted or removed based on citizens' feedback, and the accompanying communication and campaign templates support local mobilisation around the action.

Finally, the evaluation of the pilot feeds into the project's policy proposals and interventions, backed by a letter of commitment, through which successful temporary measures are carried into permanent decisions – adoption in the SUMP or greening plan, dedicated budget lines, or scaled replication at further sites. In this way the full set of Streets for Citizens deliverables closes the loop from engagement to planning, financing, and durable transformation of public space.

As with the digital solution presented above, the figure below shows how the components of the Euro-MED Tactical Urbanism Toolkit can be embedded across the preparation cycle of the two planning instruments the solution is designed to support — **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and Urban Greening (Nature Urban) Plans** — indicating, for each stage, the corresponding step in each framework and the toolkit components that add the greatest value.

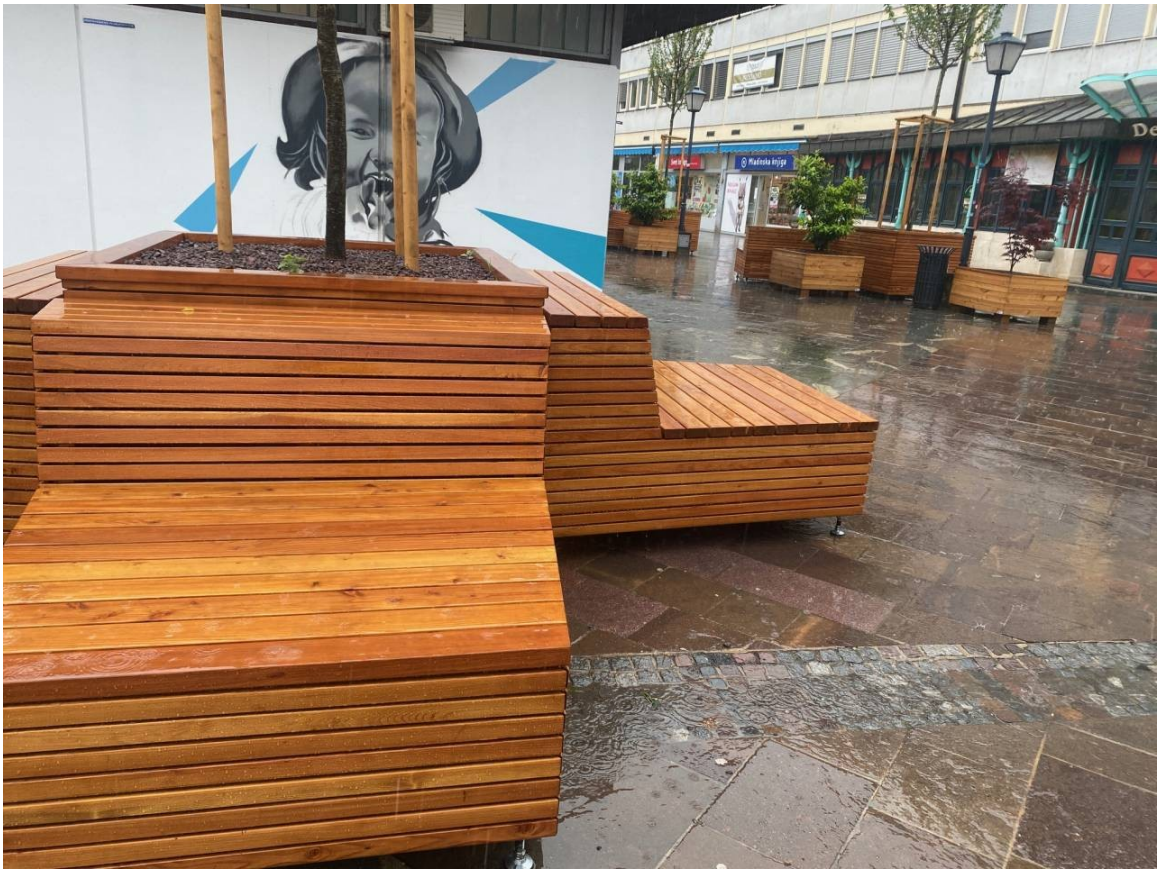
TACTICAL URBANISM TOOLKIT ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — SUMP · URBAN GREENING PLAN		
Toolkit components: ① Baseline study and good-practice catalogue · ② People-centred engagement and co-design · ③ Capacity building and training · ④ Roll-up action planning · ⑤ Pop-up tactical interventions and evaluation		
PLANNING STAGE	**SUMP (ELTIS CYCLE)**	**URBAN GREENING / NATURE URBAN PLAN**
1. Preparation and capacity building ① ③	Set up the working structures and planning framework, and build local capacity for tactical approaches (Phase 1).	Secure political commitment, set up the multi-actor partnership, and build a shared knowledge base (Getting started).
2. Diagnosis and shared vision ① ②	Analyse the mobility situation and engage citizens on street and public-space problems; co-develop the common vision (Phases 1–2).	Assess green-space provision and needs with residents; define a shared vision for greener, more liveable streets (Assess and plan).
3. Intervention design and prioritisation ② ④	Translate the vision into a territorial roll-up action plan; co-design and prioritise mobility measures and demonstration actions (Phase 3).	Co-design nature-based and greening interventions for streets and public space; prioritise sites and measures.
4. Pilot implementation and demonstration ② ⑤	Install low-cost pop-up interventions so citizens can experience reallocated street space before permanent measures (Phase 4).	Install temporary greenery, shading, seating, and playful elements to demonstrate cooler, greener, more usable public space.
5. Evaluation, scaling and policy uptake ⑤	Evaluate pilots, communicate results, and feed successful measures into the SUMP and its monitoring; support permanent adoption (Phase 4).	Monitor greening outcomes and comfort; scale replicable measures to further sites and anchor them in the plan.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on the ELTIS SUMP Guidelines and EU Urban Greening Plan guidance. The Euro-MED Tactical Urbanism Toolkit supports SUMPs and Nature Urban / Greening Plans, testing interventions through temporary, low-cost pilots before any permanent commitment.		

The toolkit in action: tactical urbanism pilots across the partner towns

The tactical urbanism approach was tested through small-scale demonstration actions in the project's partner towns — Ptuj (Slovenia), Utebo (Spain), Portalegre (Portugal), Ioannina (Greece), Latsia–Nicosia (Cyprus), the Lazio Region (Italy), and Centar–Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In each case, a locally defined mobility and public-space challenge was addressed by temporarily reclaiming street space for people and inviting residents to experience and co-shape the change.

The Ptuj pilot, implemented by the local public services company together with the project partners, illustrates the approach in detail.

PILOT IN FOCUS: Ptuj (Slovenia) — The pilot addressed the lack of attractive, green, and climate-adapted public space, responding to urban heat stress, underused areas, and a low-quality street environment. A central, frequently used site with high transformation potential was selected, and the interventions were co-created with local stakeholders following tactical urbanism principles. Concretely, the action introduced large and small planting containers with trees to add shade, greenery, and a better microclimate; multi-level (double-height) benches offering flexible seating for different user groups; a mural to strengthen the visual identity of the space and foster local engagement; a three-sided chalkboard to encourage play, creativity, and interaction across all ages; and a misting device to cool the space during hot summer periods. The result was a more vibrant and inviting space that encouraged informal gatherings and social exchange, stimulated artistic expression especially among children and young people, and received positive feedback from residents and stakeholders who recognised the immediate impact and low cost of the measures. The pilot thus **demonstrated how simple, replicable interventions can quickly transform an underused space into a lively, inclusive, and climate-responsive area**, and how they can be scaled to other locations in Ptuj and beyond.



The Ptuj tactical urbanism pilot site: multi-level wooden benches and large planting containers with trees, with the mural strengthening the visual identity of the square. Source: Streets for Citizens, Ptuj pilot.

The wider pilot network **-** alongside Ptuj, the remaining partner towns carried out their own demonstration actions on locally defined challenges — for example, Utebo's "Liveable public space" demonstration — each guided by a territorial roll-up mobility action plan and using participatory formats to involve residents and businesses in reclaiming street space for people. The pilots were

carried out during 2026, with the final actions completed in the second half of the year, and their results feed directly into the refinement of the Euro-MED Tactical Urbanism Toolkit and into a set of policy proposals and interventions.

Across the network, the pilots reinforce the project's central message that engagement works best when it is hands-on and visible. The temporary, low-cost nature of tactical urbanism lets citizens test and demonstrate how public spaces can be repurposed for human-centred uses before any permanent commitment, lowering the political and financial risk for small and medium municipalities. The experiences point to a consistent set of enablers — a central and frequently used location, the combination of greenery, seating, and playful or creative elements, strong involvement of local stakeholders, and basic coordination between the municipality, designers, and the community — while the main challenges, namely maintenance responsibilities and dependence on weather conditions, can be anticipated through clear planning and climate-adapted design such as shading and cooling.

5.3 URWAN: Start Park Co-Design Toolkit for Green-Blue Urban Regeneration

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

URWAN

START PARK CO-DESIGN TOOLKIT — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Community Engagement	Nature Urban / Greening · Heating and Cooling Plan	Social · Territorial	Urban · Peri-urban Areas
TYPE OF SOLUTION	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Methodology · Toolkit · Guidelines	Green Living Areas	URWAN (IRIDRA · SVIMED)	SWIMED Barbara Sarnari
Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · Deliverable D.3.1.1 — URWAN			

The Start Park co-design toolkit is the flagship solution of URWAN (Urban Regenerative Water Avant-garde), a project that promotes Nature-based Solutions to address climate change and water scarcity across the Mediterranean through a participatory approach. Start Park is a replicable model for co-designing urban green areas that build resilience to climate change at multiple scales — ecosystem, household, and community — in which citizens and experts collaborate to shape both the physical green-blue infrastructure and the educational programmes around it, fostering awareness of the role of water and green areas in climate adaptation. The areas are designed following best practices from leading city adaptation plans and integrate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), sustainable water management, and urban greening. In the ETU solutions

catalogue the toolkit is classified under the Green Community Engagement theme, contributes to the social and territorial pillars of the Ecosystemic Transition Unit model, and is designed to support the realisation of Nature Urban / Urban Greening Plans and local Heating and Cooling Plans.

Community engagement is the explicit purpose of the toolkit rather than a supporting activity: the challenge it sets out to address is precisely how to strengthen citizen engagement in co-designing urban green areas that build climate resilience. In practice, the public authority leads participatory labs that bring citizens together with expert facilitators to translate a shared vision and the available data into concrete green-blue project proposals. The process delivers tangible outputs for the whole community — co-designed project proposals, a structured comparison of alternatives, and a first set of shared design choices — while the educational programmes attached to each Start Park build lasting awareness of water-sensitive and nature-based approaches. A serious-game format supports the labs, making the trade-offs between greening, water management, and urban comfort accessible to non-experts and giving residents a genuine role in shaping their neighbourhoods.

The toolkit is dedicated primarily to political decision-makers in local and regional authorities and to technical staff across urban planning, environment, civil protection, mobility, and public-works departments, as well as to professionals involved in urban regeneration, with public authorities and citizens as the final beneficiaries; it is best suited to the co-design of urban and peri-urban areas. To apply it, the authority first identifies an urban-regeneration area and defines its priority challenges — such as public-space degradation, flood risk, urban heat islands, ecological quality, and socio-environmental inequalities — and gathers the relevant data, after which the Start Park process itself requires the support of expert facilitators. Within URWAN, the toolkit forms part of a wider enabler pack alongside the **Integrated Decision Support System** (IDSS, with a digital twin and scenario simulation), the **URWAN Catalogue of Nature-based Solutions**, and the **Training Kit,** all connected through a Road Map that helps authorities make urban-regeneration interventions more green-blue by integrating Nature-based Solutions.

As for the other solutions, the figure below maps the components of the Start Park co-design toolkit onto the preparation cycle of the two planning instruments it is designed to support — Urban Greening (Nature Urban) Plans and local Heating and Cooling Plans — showing, for each stage, the corresponding step in each framework and the components that add the greatest value.

START PARK CO-DESIGN TOOLKIT ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — URBAN GREENING · HEATING AND COOLING PLAN		
Toolkit components: ① Challenge framing and data gathering · ② Participatory co-design labs · ③ Scenario and alternatives comparison · ④ Co-designed green-blue proposals · ⑤ Educational programmes and stewardship		
PLANNING STAGE	**URBAN GREENING / NATURE URBAN PLAN**	**HEATING AND COOLING PLAN**
1. Preparation and challenge framing ①	Secure commitment, identify the urban-regeneration area, and define priority green-space and water challenges; gather baseline data.	Frame urban-heat and cooling challenges and assemble the relevant climate and territorial data.
2. Diagnosis and shared vision ① ②	Run participatory labs where citizens and experts read the data together and co-develop a green-blue regeneration vision.	Map heat-vulnerable areas and cooling needs, and build a shared vision linking greenery, water, and thermal comfort.
3. Scenario development and comparison ② ③	Translate the vision and data into green-blue options and compare NbS and SuDS alternatives through a structured, game-supported process.	Compare cooling scenarios — green corridors, shading, water features — against adaptation and comfort targets.
4. Co-designed proposals and shared choices ③ ④	Consolidate first shared design choices into co-designed green-blue project proposals feeding the plan.	Feed the co-designed Nature-based Solution proposals into the cooling and adaptation measures of the plan.
5. Implementation, awareness and stewardship ④ ⑤	Implement NbS interventions and deliver educational programmes that build awareness of water and green areas.	Monitor thermal-comfort and adaptation outcomes and sustain community stewardship of the solutions.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on EU Urban Greening Plan guidance and Local Heating and Cooling Plan requirements under the Energy Efficiency Directive. Start Park is a co-design methodology run through participatory labs with expert facilitators, integrating SuDS, sustainable water management, and urban greening.		

Start Park in action: co-design pilots in four Mediterranean territories

The Start Park model was tested in four pilot territories — Cuba in the Alentejo (Portugal), Rome and Ferla in Sicily (Italy), Ptuj (Slovenia), and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) — each applying the participatory co-design process to a locally defined green-blue regeneration challenge. A dedicated dossier for each experience is being made available on the URWAN website, and citizen feedback from the pilots is documented on the project's video channel.

Rome — "Matteo Ricci" School (Italy) — Located in a public school in Municipality IX, the Rome pilot demonstrates how Nature-based Solutions can improve urban resilience through sustainable stormwater management and climate adaptation. The intervention reduces soil sealing and manages external water flows through depaving, rain gardens, bioretention systems, permeable surfaces, and rainwater-harvesting solutions that collect, infiltrate, retain, and naturally filter rainwater while mitigating the urban heat island effect. Crucially for the Start Park model, the site works as a living laboratory in which students, teachers, families, and local stakeholders actively participate in the co-design and monitoring of the solutions, fostering environmental awareness and long-term stewardship.

Cuba, Alentejo (Portugal) — The Cuba pilot addresses one of the most pressing challenges of Mediterranean territories — water scarcity — by promoting a circular approach to water management. It integrates Nature-based Solutions designed to capture, treat, store, and reuse alternative water resources, including vertical constructed wetlands, green roofs, water-storage infrastructure, and water-reuse systems that support urban vegetation while reducing dependence on conventional supplies, showing how urban green infrastructure can advance climate adaptation, biodiversity, and resource efficiency in drought-affected regions.

Ferla, Ptuj and Sarajevo — The remaining experiences extend the co-design process to further contexts: Ferla in Sicily, where URWAN ran a dedicated co-design laboratory, and the pilots in Ptuj (Slovenia) and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which — like the other GLA Mission pilots hosted in these same two cities — apply the participatory Start Park approach to locally defined green-blue regeneration needs. Together, the four territories show how a single co-design methodology can be adapted to settings ranging from a metropolitan school to small inland municipalities.

Across the pilots, the Start Park experiences reinforce the project's central message that durable, water-sensitive urban regeneration depends on genuine community involvement. By combining participatory labs, a shared catalogue of Nature-based Solutions, and educational programmes, the model turns citizens and local stakeholders from consultees into co-designers and long-term stewards of the green-blue spaces created — an approach that is directly transferable to other Mediterranean authorities preparing Urban Greening or Heating and Cooling Plans.

5.4 NUDGES: the NUDGES SOLUTIONS for behavioural and cultural climate engagement

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

NUDGES

NUDGES SOLUTION — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Community Engagement	SECAP · SUMP · Nature Urban Plan	Organisational · Social	Urban · Peri-urban Areas
TYPE OF SOLUTION	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Methodology ·	Green Living Areas	NUDGES project	ANATEL (Cyprus)

Proofs of Concept		consortium	Evdokia Balamou

Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · NUDGES SOLUTCION

The NUDGES SOLUTIONS is the flagship result of the NUDGES project, which tackles one of the central obstacles to climate action: the gap between climate awareness and real behavioural change, caused by the abstract, psychologically distant way in which climate issues are usually perceived. Rather than a single tool, it is a coherent suite of behavioural and cultural instruments built around the idea of the nudge - a light-touch, culturally grounded prompt that makes sustainable choices easier and more appealing. Its most visible expression is a set of multisensory interventions that use sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, together with identity and storytelling, to turn abstract climate knowledge into tangible, emotional, and participatory experiences. In the ETU solutions catalogue the solution sits under the Green Community Engagement theme, contributes to the **organisational and social pillars** of the Ecosystemic Transition Hub model, and is designed to support the realisation of **SECAPs, SUMPs, and Nature Urban / Urban Greening Plans.**

Community engagement is not a by-product of the solution but its very mechanism: the nudges work precisely by involving citizens and often children, families, and schools as active participants rather than passive recipients of information. Across the pilots, participants take part in design contests, musical walking routes, herb and food workshops, hands-on experiments, and identity-building activities, and in doing so become communicators and multipliers of climate messages within their own communities. Because the interventions are experiential and emotional, they reduce the psychological distance of climate change and reinforce social norms walking to school together, eating local food together, caring for a shared heritage site which the evaluations show to be more effective than information alone.

To make this approach transferable and durable, the NUDGES SOLUTCIONS brings together more complementary deliverables to make a wholl picture of solutcion:

- **Database of good practise examples –** showcasing innovative and effective green nudges implemented across various sectors.
- **NUDGES Proofs of Concept —** the six multisensory pilot interventions and their individual reports, demonstrating how sensory and cultural nudges reduce psychological distance and increase sustainable behaviour.
- **Action Research Methodology and Operational Protocols;** step-by-step protocols for designing, running, and evaluating behavioural and cultural nudges, including the Climate Perception Scale and ethical / GDPR guidelines.
- **Transferability and Scaling Framework —** modular, Living-Lab-based pathways for replication, adaptation, scaling, and mainstreaming across diverse cultural and institutional contexts.
- **Action Research Agenda for 2027 —** a strategic roadmap linking future research, policy integration, and scaling priorities for behavioural and cultural climate action.
- **Community of Interest and Manifesto —** a collaboration agreement, signed by 28 partners, that sustains an open Mediterranean community for behavioural climate action beyond the project's lifetime.

HOW TO USE THE SOLUTION IN PRACTICE.

For a public authority or facilitator, the NUDGES SOLUTCIONS is applied as a repeatable action-research cycle rather than an off-the-shelf product. The process starts bottom-up: partner with local actors - schools, families, museums, community organisations, etc., to identify the specific behavioural frictions that hold back a climate-friendly habit, such as car use, waste, diet, or energy consumption. A dominant sensory pathway is then chosen — sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, or identity and storytelling — and locally meaningful, culturally grounded nudges are co-designed around it. The intervention is run in situ as a small Living Lab, typically comparing baseline with control, nudge, and cultural groups, and its effect on climate perception and behaviour is measured with the project's Climate Perception Scale, complemented by follow-ups at three and six months.

The Action Research Methodology provides the step-by-step protocols, questionnaires, and ethical and GDPR guidance for this cycle, while the Transferability and Scaling Framework and the Action Research Agenda set out how to iterate, standardise a minimal set of shared indicators, and mainstream successful nudges into existing municipal plans, school curricula, and cultural festivals. To sustain the work beyond a single pilot, authorities can join the NUDGES Community of Interest and draw on the Manifesto and the shared good-practice database, turning a one-off experiment into a durable, transferable practice.

The figure below maps these components onto the preparation cycle of the three planning instruments the solution supports: SECAPs, SUMPs, and Nature Urban / Urban Greening Plans — showing, for each stage, the corresponding step in each framework and the NUDGES components that add the greatest value.

NUDGES SOLUTION ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — SECAP · SUMP · NATURE URBAN PLAN			
NUDGES components: ① Action-research methodology and protocols · ② Multisensory nudge interventions · ③ Evaluation and Climate Perception Scale · ④ Transferability and scaling framework · ⑤ Community of Interest, Manifesto and Agenda			
PLANNING STAGE	**SECAP (COVENANT OF MAYORS)**	**SUMP (ELTIS CYCLE)**	**NATURE URBAN / GREENING PLAN**
1. Preparation and behavioural diagnosis ①	Frame climate-behaviour challenges and baseline awareness within the mitigation and adaptation planning phase.	Identify car-dependency and mobility-behaviour barriers during the analysis phase.	Assess disconnection from nature and unsustainable consumption alongside green-space needs.
2. Co-design of nudge interventions ① ②	Co-design cultural and behavioural nudges targeting energy, waste and consumption behaviours.	Design sensory nudges encouraging walking, cycling and modal shift, such as musical walking routes.	Design multisensory experiences that reconnect citizens with green and blue spaces.
3. Pilot implementation and engagement ②	Run behavioural pilots and Living Labs engaging schools, families and communities.	Test nudges on daily routines such as the school commute, with families and schools.	Deliver sensory and identity-based activities in parks, gardens and heritage sites.
4. Evaluation and evidence ③	Measure behavioural change and climate perception with the Climate Perception Scale to inform the plan.	Evaluate modal-shift intentions and habit formation using comparable indicators.	Assess awareness, wellbeing and stewardship outcomes.
5. Scaling, mainstreaming and policy integration ④ ⑤	Mainstream effective nudges into climate-action measures and monitoring, sustained by the Community of Interest.	Scale successful mobility nudges and anchor them in the plan and its monitoring.	Replicate green-space engagement and feed the Action Research Agenda for 2027.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on the NUDGES Action Research Methodology and the ELTIS SUMP, Covenant of Mayors SECAP, and EU Urban Greening Plan cycles. NUDGES applies behavioural and cultural nudges through Living Labs and measures their effect with the Climate Perception Scale.			

The NUDGES Solution in action: six multisensory pilots across the Mediterranean

The multisensory approach was tested through six pilots; one for each sense plus an identity-based experience, carried out in six countries and documented in the Proofs of Concept and the individual pilot reports. Each pilot paired a single sensory or identity trigger with a locally relevant climate behaviour, allowing the project to compare how different entry points drive engagement and change.

THE SIX MULTISENSORY NUDGES PILOTS		
PILOT (TRIGGER)	**LOCATION · PARTNER**	**FOCUS AND KEY FINDING**
Power of Visuals SIGHT	Gabrovo, Bulgaria · Museum of Humor and Satire	Design contest, Climate Fresk and billboards turning waste and recycling into visible challenges; strong, lasting rise in awareness among youth, confirmed at a 3-month follow-up.
Sound Inspiration SOUND	Madridejos, Spain · MUSOL Foundation	Musical walking routes replacing the car for the school run; significant rise in belief in individual climate action and evidence of habit formation.
A Smell of Change SMELL	Slovenska Bistrica – Žiče Monastery, Slovenia · e-Zavod	Herb and heritage smell walks and workshops for sustainable consumption; strong emotional engagement, with decay over time underlining the need for repetition.
Tasting the Transformation TASTE	Thessaloniki, Greece · Aristotle University (AUTH)	Tasting and cooking sessions linking diet to climate; measurable shift towards local, sustainable diets and high community participation.
Touching the Untouchable TOUCH	Pescara, Italy · University d'Annunzio (UdA)	Hands-on, embodied activities making climate tangible; better memory retention and stronger pro-sustainability intentions.
Next Generation Citizens IDENTITY	Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina · PREDA	Identity and storytelling turning children into "Eco Heroes"; behavioural spillover from children to families and new social norms.

Source: NUDGES Proofs of Concept and pilot reports.

PILOT IN FOCUS: Next Generation Citizens – Eco Heroes (Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Bosnian pilot, implemented by the Development Agency of the City of Prijedor (PREDA) between March and June 2025, tested the identity and cultural nudge dimension of the NUDGES Solution with 25 children aged 6-14, most of them accompanied by a parent. The intervention followed a

three-step pathway: a baseline “no-nudge” workshop delivered in a traditional classroom format, four training workshops applying behavioural stimuli, and a closing community campaign — structured as a gamified journey through “levels”. At each level children unlocked a new eco-role on their Eco Hero Mission Map, progressing from Eco Detective and Planet Guardian through Recycling Wizard and Eco Gardener to Eco Influencer, so that they experienced themselves not as pupils receiving instructions but as active heroes protecting the planet.

The workshops layered multi-sensory and cultural nudges into every setting: an immersive cinema event around the film WALL-E with lavender scent, ambient nature sounds and eco-message popcorn boxes; the “Cvijeta” cardboard recycling box that “ate” only plastic water bottles - with the result that no juice bottle was opened during the workshop; the transformation of the collected bottles into 3D-printed toys; an outdoor eco-gardening session with take-home potted herbs as “living reminders”; and a “Juice of the Future” tasting linking climate change to food quality. The children’s drawings and story ideas were developed, with AI-supported illustration, into the pilot book “Nudgy and the Battle for a Clean Planet”, which each Eco Hero received as a personal legacy of the programme.



Eco-hero characters developed within the “Next Generation Citizens – Eco Heroes” pilot in Prijedor: Eco Detective, Planet Guardian, Recycling Wizard, Eco Gardener and Eco Influencer. Source: NUDGES Deliverable D2.6.1, Outputs and outcomes from the NUDGES pilot in Bosnia and Herzegovina (PREDA).

The results confirm the strength of the identity-based approach. Post-intervention measurements showed statistically significant increases in the belief that climate change is real and human-caused (Hedge’s g up to +1.23), and the six-month follow-up recorded a durably positive trend rather than a rebound to baseline values. Twenty-three of the 25 children completed the full set of missions, while parents — recognised with the “Nudgy’s Friend” badge — reinforced the new routines at home. The pilot also demonstrated spontaneous transfer: selected elements were replicated with stakeholders in Brčko, and a participating parent, herself a teacher, independently reused the storytelling and eco-character methodology in a classroom Earth Day activity, confirming children and families as behavioural multipliers and the modular transferability of the approach.

Taken together**, the pilots deliver a consistent set of findings**. Sensory and emotional engagement reduces the psychological distance of climate change and outperforms information alone; daily-routine and cultural contexts strongly amplify impact; children and young people act as powerful multipliers, carrying new behaviours back to their families; and, crucially, the effects fade without repetition, so lasting change depends on sustained programming rather than one-off events. These insights are precisely what the methodology, scaling framework, manifesto, and research agenda are designed to carry forward, turning six local experiments into a transferable model for behavioural and cultural climate engagement across Mediterranean cities.

RECinMED: Solar Community Toolkit for citizen-led renewable energy communities

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

RECinMED

RECINMED SOLAR COMMUNITY TOOLKIT — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Green Energy Systems	Not tied to a statutory plan	All six ETU pillars	Urban Areas
TYPE OF SOLUTION	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Digital platform · Toolkit	Green Living Areas	RECinMED (University of Bologna)	Federico De Robbio University of Bologna
Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · RECinMED, WP1 Activity 1.4, Output 1.2			

The RECinMED Solar Community Toolkit (Work Package 1, Activity 1.4, Output 1.2) is the flagship solution of RECinMED, a project that helps citizens and municipalities set up Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) across the Mediterranean. Tested in Granada, the toolkit is designed to simplify the creation of RECs in urban areas by combining three complementary elements: plug-and-play solar kits, a digital platform that assesses rooftop solar potential and expected savings, and a community engagement strategy that involves citizens and local stakeholders. Together these tools help people understand, access, and participate in solar energy communities through an approach that is practical, inclusive, and easily replicable across Mediterranean cities. In the ETU solutions catalogue the toolkit is classified under the Green Energy Systems theme, is one of the few solutions to contribute to all six pillars of the Ecosystemic Transition Unit model — organisational, environmental, social, territorial, technological, and financial — and is offered as a digital platform and toolbox for urban contexts.

Community engagement is treated as a precondition for the energy transition rather than an add-on. The toolkit responds directly to weak community engagement and low trust, which the project identifies as key barriers — alongside limited awareness and technical complexity — that hold back the uptake of Renewable Energy Communities. Its engagement strategy is built to reach households, including vulnerable ones, as well as schools, local businesses, municipal civic centres, and active community groups, and it deliberately translates complex technical and financial questions into simple, actionable insights so that non-experts can take part in collective decisions. In this way the toolkit turns the abstract idea of a renewable energy community into an accessible, shared project that citizens can understand, trust, and help to run.

The toolkit is dedicated primarily to urban areas — with Granada as its testing site — and to citizens and organisations willing to join or launch local energy communities, while remaining replicable in other Mediterranean urban contexts. Implementing it requires a combination of technical, organisational, and social competences together with access to key data: rooftop and cadastral data, solar irradiation, and energy-consumption profiles, and local regulatory information on the technical side; PV design, GIS mapping, platform development, and energy-economic (ROI) analysis; institutional support from municipalities and alignment with national and regional rules; and, crucially, community-engagement skills — communication, facilitation, and stakeholder coordination — to secure citizen participation and trust. Its modular and replicable design is what allows the same approach to be adapted across different Mediterranean cities, increasing its scalability and impact.

Although the project reports that the toolkit is not tied to a single statutory plan, Renewable Energy Communities are a natural component of municipal climate and energy planning. The figure below maps the toolkit's components onto the preparation cycle of the two most relevant instruments — Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans and local Heating and Cooling Plans — showing, for each stage, the corresponding step in each framework and the toolkit components that add the greatest value.

RECINMED SOLAR COMMUNITY TOOLKIT ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — SECAP · HEATING AND COOLING PLAN		
Toolkit components: ① Community engagement strategy · ② Digital rooftop-potential and savings platform · ③ Plug-and-play solar kits · ④ Modular, replicable design		
PLANNING STAGE	**SECAP (COVENANT OF MAYORS)**	**HEATING AND COOLING PLAN**
1. Preparation and stakeholder mobilisation ①	Set up the energy-and-climate team and mobilise citizens and local stakeholders around the energy transition (Initiation).	Establish the working group and engage stakeholders for local heating and cooling planning.
2. Assessment and baseline ②	Feed rooftop-solar potential and expected savings into the Baseline Emission Inventory and the energy analysis.	Map local energy demand and renewable-generation potential, including community rooftop solar.
3. Action design and prioritisation ① ②	Co-design Renewable Energy Community actions with citizens and prioritise them among the plan's mitigation measures.	Integrate community solar and self-consumption into the renewable-supply measures of the plan.
4. Implementation and community setup ③	Establish the energy community and install shared solar capacity as a concrete SECAP action.	Deploy the plug-and-play solar capacity contributing to local energy-supply targets.
5. Monitoring, replication and scaling ④	Monitor energy and emission savings for the reporting cycle and replicate the model in new districts.	Track generation and savings, and scale the approach to further neighbourhoods and cities.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on the Covenant of Mayors SECAP cycle and Local Heating and Cooling Plan requirements under the Energy Efficiency Directive. The RECinMED toolkit is a bottom-up instrument for creating Renewable Energy Communities; although the project reports it is not tied to a single statutory plan, RECs are a natural component of SECAPs and local heating and cooling planning.		

RECinMED in action: three pilots in rural, urban and island territories

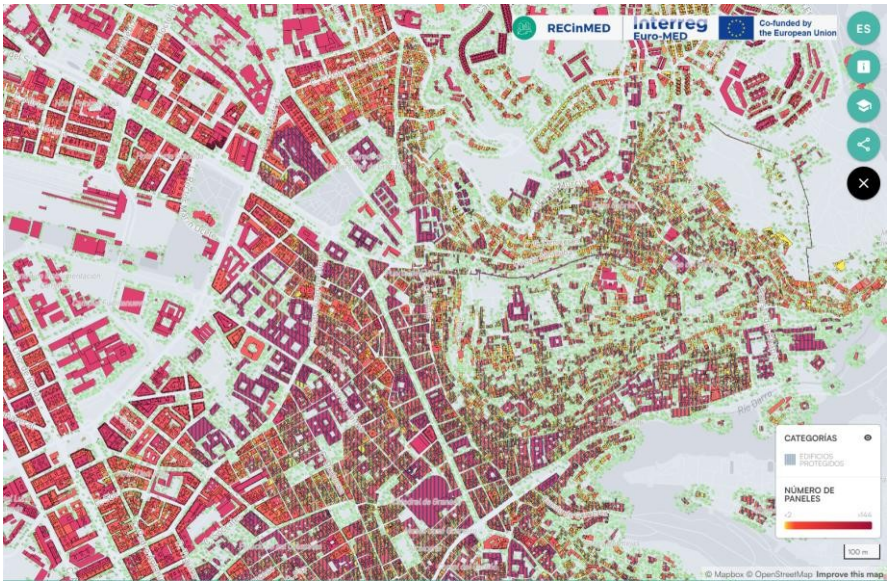
RECinMED tested its approach in three types of Mediterranean territory, each followed by its own Working Group: rural areas (Gavião, Portugal and Smolyan, Bulgaria), urban areas (Granada, Spain) and islands (Šolta, Croatia). The three pilots and their Action Plans were designed jointly within the Working Groups, documented in testing reports and checked through a peer review technical assessment. In every setting the same pattern emerged: the technology was the easy part, while administrative complexity, missing know how and trust decided how far a community could go.

THE THREE RECINMED PILOTS		
PILOT (SETTING)	**LOCATION · PARTNER**	**FOCUS AND KEY FINDING**
Roofs first, then people RURAL AREAS	Gavião, Portugal and Smolyan, Bulgaria · WG lead: AREANATejo	132 panels (73 kW) on the school, pool and town hall of Gavião, a Stakeholder Hub and a workshop with 42 people; energy bikes and solar kits in Smolyan schools (about 80 students and teachers). Result: draft statutes and regulations for the future Gavião REC and a step by step guide with a checklist.
A map, a kit, a community URBAN AREAS	Granada, Spain · WG lead: University of Bologna	E·Atlas solar map with REC matching, four plug and play solar kits with batteries in schools and civic centres, six neighbourhood meetings (83 people) and creative work with a social photography school. Key finding: kits explain solar power well, but the step to sharing energy must be explained explicitly.
Solar on a recycling yard ISLANDS	Šolta, Croatia · RERA SD Split, with Neapolis University Pafos (WG lead)	60 panels (27 kW) with batteries and remote monitoring on the municipal recycling yard, with the site confirmed by a simple 5 step GIS method. At the public workshop and plant visit, most of the 20 respondents backed a REC on Šolta and none opposed it; 32 professionals trained at the University of Split.

Source: RECinMED presentation at the C4LA bilateral meeting (28 October 2026) and RECinMED pilot testing reports.

PILOT IN FOCUS: A map, a kit, a community (Granada, Spain). In a city there are plenty of roofs and potential members, but residents rarely know where to start. The Granada pilot, followed by the urban Working Group led by the University of Bologna, tested three complementary ways in, which together form the Solar Community Toolkit described above. The first is a map: the E·Atlas platform shows for each roof its solar potential, installation cost, payback time and CO2 savings, and lets residents state that they want to join or create an energy community. In this way individual curiosity becomes visible collective demand that the municipality and local organisers can act on.

The second is a kit: four plug and play solar kits with batteries, installed as energy labs in two primary schools and as backup power for essential equipment in two civic centres, so that solar energy becomes something people can see, touch and use in places they already know. The third is a community: six neighbourhood meetings reached 83 residents, sessions were held in six primary schools, and creative work with La Ampliadora, a social photography school, produced a solar dome, local stories and QR stickers that link the street to the online map.



E·Atlas solar map of Granada: for each roof it shows solar potential, cost, payback and CO2 savings, and lets residents say they want to join or create an energy community. Source: RECinMED, granada-atlas.urbanimpacte.com.

The pilot also gave a clear lesson. The kits proved very effective in explaining how solar power works, especially to pupils, who carry the message home to their families. The step from producing energy to sharing it within a community, however, does not happen by itself and has to be explained explicitly. Late delivery of the kits also weakened their link with the engagement activities, which shows that procurement must be planned early and in step with the engagement calendar.

Each RECinMED tool is modular: it can be adopted on its own, without the full RECinMED package, by organisations outside the partnership. The table below summarises what each tool offers to a public authority that wants to replicate it, where it fits best and what to watch out for.

WHAT IS MOST TRANSFERABLE FROM RECINMED			
TOOL	**Methodological guide** RURAL AREAS	**Solar energy toolkit** URBAN AREAS · D2.2.1	**Island toolkit** ISLANDS · D2.3.1
Effort to adopt	Medium to low	Low to medium	Low
Transferable core	Checklist and 8 phase pathway Statutes and regulations as templates Diagnosis method for sparsely populated areas	Off the shelf PV kits, reusable as school energy labs E·Atlas model with REC matching Creative engagement: art and storytelling	5 step GIS method for areas with little data PV, storage and monitoring on public brownfield sites Engagement format on two levels (public and professional)
Best fit	Rural municipalities with public buildings	Urban municipalities with school networks	Small and medium islands and other small communities
Watch out	Legal parts follow Portuguese law: adapt them to each national REC framework	The platform needs open municipal and cadastral data, hosting and trained operators	Seasonality: avoid the tourist peak and the winter exodus for events

Source: RECinMED presentation at the C4LA bilateral meeting (28 October 2026). Each tool can be adopted on its own, without the full RECinMED package.

Three open resources support replication beyond the partnership. A free online training course on RECs in six modules (www.recinmed.eu) covers the whole path, from the policy and regulatory framework, technical aspects and financial models to community engagement, social innovation and implementation. The Euro-MED Renewable Energy Communities Cooperation Forum (linkedin.com/groups/10011574), an open group of 134 members, keeps the exchange going between energy communities, authorities and experts. Finally, the policy brief *Policy-Making Recommendations for Science-Based Communication on Renewable Energy Communities* (August 2026) sets out eight recommendations, from transparency on costs and benefits and plain language to training for local leaders, joint design with citizens, digital outreach and monitoring. Its core idea is simple: source, method, verification. Authorities pick their setting (urban, rural or island), check its typical communication challenges and choose the recommendations that fit.

Taken together**, the pilots offer four lessons that save replicators time**. Start from a visible public asset: municipal roofs or a recycling yard cut land and permit barriers and give people something concrete to visit. Engage before you build, because the main obstacles are social and administrative, not technical. Plan procurement early, so that equipment is in place when the engagement activities need it. Adapt the legal part nationally, since REC rules differ from country to country. On islands timing also matters: in summer residents are busy with tourism and in winter many leave, few local actors can lead the process, and outside support is often needed. With these lessons and the modular tools, RECinMED results can be used by local and regional authorities, energy agencies and one stop shops, schools, installers and civil society organisations well beyond the nine partner countries.

CO2 PACMAN: Interactive Climate Scenario Tool for co-creating climate-neutral islands

Interreg Euro-MED | Co-funded by the European Union

CO2 PACMAN

CO2 PACMAN INTERACTIVE CLIMATE SCENARIO TOOL — ETU SOLUTION PROFILE			
THEME	**RELATED LOCAL PLAN**	**ETU PILLARS**	**TYPE OF TERRITORY**
Resilient Planning · Energy Systems · Mobility · Community Engagement	SECAP · SUMP · Nature Urban Plan	Five of six ETU pillars (all except Financial)	Islands · Coastal Areas
TYPE OF SOLUTION	**MISSION**	**DEVELOPED BY**	**CONTACT POINT**
Digital tool · Interactive simulator	Green Living Areas	CO2 PACMAN (University of Siena)	Simone Bastianoni (UNISI)
Source: ETU Initiative solutions catalogue · CO2 PACMAN, Deliverables 1.3.1 and 1.4.1, Outputs 1.1 and 3.1 · co2pacman.eu/p/co2-pacman-tool			

The CO2 PACMAN Interactive Climate Scenario Tool is the flagship solution of CO2 PACMAN (Cooperation and Co-designing Partnership for Climate Neutrality), coordinated by the University of Siena. It is an interactive online platform that supports citizens, students, businesses, and public authorities in the transition to climate neutrality: inspired by a classic video game, it turns complex climate data into an engaging experience in which every policy or technology the user selects visibly reduces emissions or increases CO_2 uptake. The Tool is both a game and a scientific simulator — accessible and fun, yet grounded in rigorous data: its foundation is the GHG Report, the greenhouse-gas inventory of each territory compiled according to the IPCC Guidelines (2006, updated 2019), with all gases converted into tonnes of CO_2 equivalent. Emissions are displayed as coloured tiles whose combined surface represents the virtual forestland needed to absorb them, making the scale of the decarbonisation challenge immediately visible. Users step into the role of a decision-maker for one of the three pilot islands — Brač (Croatia), Crete (Greece) or Elba (Italy) — explore the island's baseline emissions, and test 28 decarbonisation strategies across energy, mobility, waste and water, and ecosystems, from behavioural change and renewable energies (including blue energy) to circular-economy solutions and more efficient buildings. In the project architecture, the solution builds on Deliverable 1.3.1 (CO2 PACMAN datasets and tool) and Deliverable 1.4.1 (GHG balance and its integration into the tool), forms part of Output 1.1, the Toolkit for the development of climate-neutrality scenarios, and feeds directly into Output 3.1, the Climate Neutrality Transition Roadmaps of the pilot islands.

The challenge the solution addresses is making greenhouse-gas data understandable and usable for decision-making: it bridges the gap between technical assessments and practical application by translating complex emissions data into a format in which users can explore and compare the

impact of different mitigation options. Its added value lies in transforming complex climate data into an interactive and visual experience, so that emissions and their reduction pathways become tangible and users can test scenarios and immediately see their effects, supporting more informed decisions. Community engagement is the very purpose of the design: the Tool turns this experience into something that anyone can use — pupils and university students, local decision-makers, small businesses, and citizens curious about their impact. At the end of each simulation the user receives a clear verdict — carbon neutrality achieved, almost there, or not yet — together with a downloadable report that works as a "personalised recipe for decarbonisation" and as a starting point for discussion in classrooms, community workshops, and policy meetings. In this way the Tool frames climate neutrality as something to be reached with citizens rather than for them, and it is deliberately embedded in the project's wider participatory ecosystem — the Rooting Labs, the Youth Think Tank, the "Island I Would Like" Labs, the AskyourcitizenonCaN survey, the 3D virtual-reality landscape scenarios, and the project podcast — so that digital simulation feeds, and is fed by, face-to-face engagement.

The solution is dedicated primarily to local authorities, planners, and practitioners involved in climate and energy planning, as well as educators and informed citizens interested in exploring emission scenarios; it is particularly suited to island and coastal territories — tested on Brač (Croatia), Crete (Greece) and Elba (Italy) — but can be adapted to any context where local-scale climate analysis is required. Implementation requires greenhouse-gas inventory data and basic territorial information to generate meaningful simulations, together with a basic understanding of emissions and climate strategies and the capacity to enter data and interpret the platform's outputs. The Tool is accompanied by a dedicated interactive presentation platform with user manuals in multiple languages (English and the languages of the three pilot islands) and video tutorials, including a YouTube walk-through. Although developed for islands, the methodology is explicitly designed for replication and can be adapted to coastal areas and cities across the Mediterranean and beyond, with the simulation outputs feeding each territory's Climate-Neutrality Transition Roadmap.

How the tool is used in practice — On the platform, the user journey follows four steps. First, the user selects an island and takes on the role of the decision-maker. Second, they discover the island's GHG emissions: the coloured tiles show the total forestland surface needed to absorb the baseline emissions calculated in the GHG Report. Third, they choose a decarbonisation strategy, combining policies and behavioural changes; each action makes tiles disappear, showing how much CO_2 is reduced or absorbed. Fourth, they explore forests as natural allies — how much existing forests absorb, and whether new trees are needed to close the gap to neutrality. The simulation report can then be downloaded, compared with others, and used to structure collective debate.

As for the other solutions, the figure below maps the components of the Interactive Climate Scenario Tool onto the preparation cycle of the two planning instruments it most directly supports — Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans and the island Climate-Neutrality Transition Roadmaps — showing, for each stage, the corresponding step in each framework and the components that add the greatest value.

CO2 PACMAN INTERACTIVE CLIMATE SCENARIO TOOL ACROSS THE PLANNING CYCLE — SECAP · CLIMATE-NEUTRALITY TRANSITION ROADMAP		
Tool components: ① GHG Report and emission baseline · ② Interactive scenario simulation (28 strategies) · ③ Forest and carbon-uptake visualisation · ④ Scenario reports and participatory debate		
PLANNING STAGE	**SECAP (COVENANT OF MAYORS)**	**CLIMATE-NEUTRALITY TRANSITION ROADMAP**
1. Preparation and stakeholder mobilisation ①	Frame the climate-neutrality challenge and mobilise citizens, schools and businesses around a shared, evidence-based starting point (Initiation).	Present the island's GHG Report in the Rooting Labs to build a common understanding of the baseline.
2. Assessment and baseline ① ③	Feed the IPCC-based GHG inventory into the Baseline Emission Inventory and visualise emissions as the forest area needed to absorb them.	Translate the inventory into tiles of virtual forestland that citizens can intuitively grasp.
3. Scenario design and prioritisation ②	Simulate and compare mitigation measures across energy, mobility, waste and water, and ecosystems before selecting the plan's actions.	Co-create decarbonisation scenarios with students, businesses and citizens in labs and classrooms.
4. Validation and adoption ② ④	Use the downloadable scenario reports to discuss trade-offs and validate the measure portfolio with stakeholders.	Consolidate the preferred scenarios into the island's Climate-Neutrality Transition Roadmap ("The Island I Would Like" Labs).
5. Monitoring, education and replication ④	Re-run the simulation as inventories are updated to track progress within the reporting cycle.	Reuse the Tool in schools and community events, and replicate the approach in other islands, coastal areas and cities.
Stage mapping: JTP elaboration based on the Covenant of Mayors SECAP cycle and the CO2 PACMAN methodology. The ETU catalogue lists SECAPs, SUMPs and Nature Urban Plans among the supported instruments; the figure focuses on the SECAP and the Climate-Neutrality Transition Roadmap as the two most directly served. The Tool is grounded in IPCC (2006, updated 2019) GHG inventories of the pilot islands Brač, Crete and Elba.		

6. Contribution of community engagement to the SDGs

The community-engagement practices consolidated in this JTP contribute directly and indirectly to a wide range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By embedding citizen participation in the green transition, they support SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through more inclusive urban planning, public-space transformation, and access to green and resilient living environments. They contribute to SDG 13 (Climate Action) by accelerating behavioural change, increasing public acceptance of mitigation and adaptation measures, and mobilising local actors around shared climate-neutrality pathways. They support SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) through the diffusion of inclusive renewable energy communities and the mainstreaming of citizen-led energy initiatives in Mediterranean territories.

Community-engagement tools also contribute to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by explicitly addressing the participation of underrepresented and vulnerable groups, and to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) when participatory processes are designed with attention to gender balance and to the specific perspectives of women in the green transition. They support SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) by strengthening transparency, accountability, and trust in public decision-making, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through transnational cooperation, knowledge transfer, and the joint mobilisation of public, private, and civic actors. Finally, by anchoring the green transition in cultural identity, heritage, and aesthetic quality - in line with the New European Bauhaus principles - the engagement practices examined in this paper reinforce the social and cultural dimensions that are essential to a just and durable transition in the Mediterranean.

7. Conclusion: links to the other Joint Technical Papers

Community engagement is not a stand-alone topic. It cuts across, and underpins, every dimension of the green transition addressed by the Green Living Areas Mission. The practices, methodologies, and tools synthesised in this JTP are most powerful when combined with the technical, planning, and financial approaches consolidated in the other Joint Technical Papers of the C4LA portfolio.

The JTP on Green and Resilient Planning highlights how participatory and co-creation approaches strengthen the integration of climate considerations into spatial planning instruments, and how tools such as living labs, stakeholder workshops, and digital engagement platforms enable the co-development of context-specific resilience solutions. The community-engagement methodologies presented here provide the operational backbone for these approaches, ensuring that resilience planning is not only technically informed but also socially anchored.

The JTP on Financing the Green Transition shows how participatory budgeting, citizen financing schemes, energy communities, and cooperative investment models can mobilise additional resources and align financial flows with community priorities. Many of the tools described in the present JTP - civic crowdfunding, CROWDVOCACY, REC governance models, participatory selection of investments - are direct enablers of the financing instruments examined there. Together, the two papers underline that citizen engagement and innovative financing are mutually reinforcing pillars of a credible green transition.

Forthcoming JTPs in the C4LA series, including those addressing green energy systems and sustainable mobility, will further articulate how community engagement supports the deployment of technical solutions in their specific sectors - from renewable energy installations and energy-efficiency interventions to mobility-as-a-service, active mobility, and rural and island mobility solutions.

Taken together, the JTPs of the C4LA portfolio offer a coherent reference framework for Mediterranean local and regional authorities engaged in the green transition. By systematically connecting community engagement to planning, financing, and sectoral implementation, they contribute to making the transition not only faster and more effective, but also more inclusive, more legitimate, and more deeply rooted in the territories and communities of the Mediterranean.